A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master Degree in Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

Are Brands which “activated” sustainable practices promoting them efficiently in Portugal?

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A Project carried out on the Master in Management Program, under the supervision of:
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January 3rd 2018

ABSTRACT

Are Brands which “activated” sustainable practices promoting them efficiently in Portugal?

Brands are developing a more sustainable business approach due to increasing environmental and social concerns, worldwide and in Portugal. However, besides the increasing availability of the Portuguese consumer to purchase sustainable brands, information about brands’ sustainable practices is not reaching these consumers. The research conducted by interviewing Portuguese sustainable consumers showed that there’s a misfit between brands’ sustainable practices and consumers perception of these sustainable practices, as a result there is much potential for improving. This project gives to every brand performing sustainable practices in Portugal significant insights on how are these practices perceived by the Portuguese sustainable consumer and what can be improved to engage with this consumer.

KEYWORDS

Social and Environmental Responsibility

Sustainable Brands

Sustainable Products

Portugal

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A. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, consumers are worried, not only about the environment but also with products' quality, their ingredients and social welfare. As a response to this increasing trend, brands are heading to a more sustainable approach.

However, are brands communicating this new business approach efficiently to consumers in Portugal? In other words, are consumers aware of brand's sustainable practices and do they make their purchase decisions according to this information?

In order to address these questions, we considered in this work project both consumers' and brands' points of view regarding sustainability and its practices. To obtain information, a primary research, using qualitative and quantitative methods, and a secondary research analysis were conducted. Finally, the consumers' and brands' points of view were compared with the aim to draw recommendations to brands with sustainable practices operating in Portugal.

B. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In order to understand the meaning of "*sustainability*", "*sustainable products"* and "*sustainable brands*" it is important to clarify their definitions.

1. SUSTAINABILITY

"*Sustainability*" nowadays is defined as "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Brundtland, 1987). Additionally, "*sustainability doesn't mean a green strategy. Sustainability is much bigger"* (Werbach, 2009). According to Werbach (2009), **sustainability integrates four dimensions**, each one focusing on different aspects: **social dimension** i.e., poverty, violence, injustice, education, public health, labor and human rights; **economic dimension** i.e., creation of profit for companies and good job conditions to people; **environmental/natural dimension** i.e., protection and restoration of the

Earth; and, finally, **cultural dimension** i.e., protection and respect of the "*diversity through which communities manifest their identity and cultivate traditions across generations*" (Werbach, 2009). In this work project, we decided to combine Brundtland's (1987) definition of sustainability with Werbach's (2009) environmental, social and economic dimensions.

2. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

As a starting point, we use Belz & Peattie's (2009) definition of sustainable products, which states that sustainable products have to comply with six features: fulfill customers' needs; focus both on environmental and social values; be environmentally-friendly from the moment the raw materials are extracted until the moment the product is disposed of; deal or provide improvements in dealing with social-ecological problems; keep a continuous evolution process in dealing with social-ecological problems; and use competitors as a benchmark to improve social and environmental performance.

Furthermore, some labels tag some sustainable characteristics and values like the Organic Food Label i.e., certifies that a product does not have any synthetic inputs in its production (The Public Health and Safety Organization, 2017; European Comission, 2017); the MSC Label i.e., guarantees a sustainable fishing (Marine Stewardship Council, s.d.); the FSC Labeling i.e., certifies that a product is made from well-managed forests, recycled material or responsible sources (Forest Stewardship Council, s.d.); the Fair-Trade Label i.e., guarantees fair rights, security and transparency to producers (Fair Trade International, s.d.); and the EKOenergy Label i.e., guarantees the use of sustainable electricity (EKOenergia, s.d.).

3. SUSTAINABLE BRANDS

In this work project, we decided to use Campher's (2014) sustainable brand concept. According to this author "*sustainable brands thrive or die by the same rules as any other brand"* (Campher, 2014, p. 23) and comply with the Belz and Peattie's (2009) four main options for brand development: line extension, brand extension, multi-brands and new brands. Moreover, the "*heart of a sustainable brand*" is the combination between the sustainability of a product and the brand since a "*sustainable brand cannot exist if the product itself does not have any sustainable characteristics"* (Campher, 2014, p. 36). Also, a sustainable product needs a brand to differentiate itself from the other products in the marketplace.

In Figure 1 Campher proposes a model that results from the combinations of the sustainable brand's fundamental principles mentioned above – products' sustainability and branding sustainability.

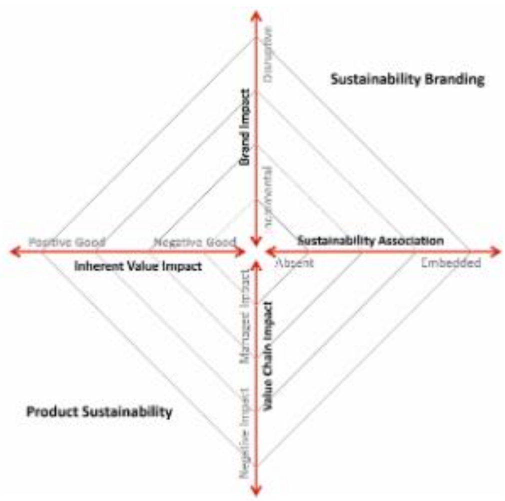

Figure 1- Sustainable Brand Model (Campher, 2014, p.68)

This model aims to guide brands in "*their search for their unique sustainable brand offer"* (Campher, 2014, p. 68) which will vary from product to product and from brand to brand since brands and products have different limitations.

C. ADDRESSING THE WORK PROJECT CHALLENGE

1. METHODOLOGY

The research is divided into 2 main topics: the consumers' standpoint and the brands' standpoint, each one "explored" worldwide and in Portugal. All the information to support these topics was collected using:

- **Secondary data** from brands' websites, books, online newspapers, between others;
- **Primary data**, to better understand consumers' standpoint in Portugal.

  In order to support this primary research, we conducted:

  - Quantitative questionnaire, which allowed us to perceive the willingness of the Portuguese consumers to purchase sustainable brands and which factors this willingness depends on (see Quantitative Questionnaire in Annex 1). This quantitative questionnaire was also used as a pre-recruitment questionnaire for the qualitative in-depth interviews.
  - Qualitative in-depth interviews to 20 Portuguese sustainable consumers, which were all conducted in Portuguese, recorded and transcribed[1] (see Qualitative Questionnaire in Annex 2 and In-Depth Interviews in Annex 3).

    The sample was selected according to the following criteria:

    - 1. Being responsible for at least 50% of their household purchases;
    - 2. Living in Portugal for at least 5 years;
    - 3. Having preference for buying sustainable brands bigger than 7, in a scale from 1 to 10.

    The topics studied in the qualitative interviews were:

    - the perception of sustainability, sustainable products and brands;
    - main drivers and influences to purchase such products and brands;
    - perception of brands who promote sustainable practices;
    - consumers' opinion regarding big brands vs. small/ local brands.

[1] The transcriptions were not translated to English in order to maintain the original interviewees' sentences

Table 1 sums up our sources of information.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="3">Consumers</th><th>Brands</th></tr>
<tr><td>Worldwide</td><td colspan="3"><u>Secondary Research</u>
- Unilever (2017)
- Musso and Weihe (2012)
- Purt (2014)
- Scarborough Research (2010)
- Brooks (2001)
- Greendex (2014)
- Accenture (2014)
- HAVAS Group (2017)
- Y&R (2017)
- DuFault and Kho (2015)
- BuzzBack (2014)
- Crowther (2014)</td><td><u>Secondary Research</u>
- FSRI (2015)
- KPMG (2015)
- Confino (2014)
- Forbes (2017)
- LEGO (2015)
- GlobeScan-SustainAbility (2017)
- Unilever (2017)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Portugal</td><td colspan="3"><u>Secondary Research</u>
- Deloitte (2017)
- SONAE (2016)
- Grande Consumo (2017)
- Associação Portuguesa de Anunciantes
- Marketeer (2017)
- Pingo Doce
- SONAE
- EDP (2017)
- Amorim Group
- Miosótis
- No Animal Exploitation
- Time Out (2017)
<u>Primary Research</u></td><td rowspan="4"><u>Secondary Research</u>
- Ben’s & Jerry’s (2017)
- Pingo Doce
- EDP (2017)
- Amorim Group
- Miosótis
- No Animal Exploitation
- Time Out (2017)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Respondents</td><td>Valid Responses[2]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Quantitative Research</td><td>293</td><td>198</td></tr>
<tr><td>Qualitative Research</td><td>20</td><td>20</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1 - Sources of Information used for this work project

[2] Respondents who completed all the questions from the quantitative questionnaire

2. RESEARCH MAIN INSIGHTS: COMPARING CONSUMERS' AND BRANDS' PERSPECTIVES

2.1. CONSUMERS' STANDPOINT

2.1.1. Worldwide

Preference for brands pursuing sustainable and ecological practices has arisen from: 20,000 adults from five countries "*33% are now choosing to buy from brands they believe are doing social or environmental good*" (Unilever, 2017).

Regarding willingness to pay a premium price for a sustainable product there is no equal footing concerning this issue: 70% of consumers are willing to pay an additional 5% for a green product if it meets the same performance and standards as a *nongreen* alternative (Miremadi, Musso, & Weihe, 2012). However, some people do not have sufficient economic conditions to spend more money on sustainable products or instead consumers say they are willing to pay but are attracted by other standard products promotions, leaving social and environmental issues behind (Purt, 2014).

The consumers willing to pay and actual purchasers are the ones considered as "Super Greenies" (around 5% of the US adult population) — "*adults who engage in 10 or more green activities, such as recycling, using rechargeable batteries or re-using grocery store bags*" who are *high-income and high-spending consumers who purchase luxury items, lead active lifestyles* and search on the internet for local information (Scarborough Research, 2010).

Most of the consumers place the responsibility of sustainable practices (either environmental, labor and social) on the government and the private sector (Greendex, 2014) however from a "*survey of 30,000 people [across twenty countries in five continents] 72% believe that business is failing to live up to expectations*" (Accenture, 2014) which affects people's trust and loyalty to brands.

Furthermore, according to another study from HAVAS Group (2017), 74% of the surveyed consumers would not care if some brands disappeared and 60% classified brands' content as being poor and irrelevant. Moreover, in 2001 consumers indicated that they had a high level of confidence in 44% of brands and by 2017 that percentage dropped to 18% (Y&R, 2017).

What do consumers define as sustainable?

Consumers' view of sustainability is not clear and often does not address the definition provided by experts (BuzzBack, 2014). In the 2014 BuzzBack's survey, US respondents only choose environmental words such as "environmentally friendly", "natural", "organic," "green", "recycle" and "renewable" as most similar to "sustainability" while, words such as "ethical, "community" and "transparency" fell behind on the relation with sustainability. Nonetheless, the Guardian asked readers to comment on Twitter and in a Guardian poll what was the words they most associate with "sustainability". The opinions diverse largely from "healthy", "future-friendly", "ecoefficiency", "ethical" between many others (DuFault & Kho, 2015). Nonetheless the unclear perception of the consumer regarding "sustainability" definition, they trust and value product's certification - 76% of the public believe that independent third-party certification is a trustful way of certifying if a product is sustainable or not (Crowther, 2014).

2.1.2. Portugal

According to the results from our quantitative questionnaire, we can verify that Portuguese consumers tend to buy products from sustainable brands in comparison to products from *standard*[3] brands since 61%, from a sample of 198 consumers, of those inquired, choose a product from a sustainable brand rather than a product from a *standard* brand. This preference does not depend from education (see Annex 4 for more details).

[3] Brands who don't promote sustainable initiatives

Preference	Frequency	Sum	Percentage	Preference	Frequency	Sum	Percentage
1	5	78	**39%**	6	27	120	**61%**
2	2			7	30		
3	8			8	27		
4	19			9	10		
5	44			10	26		
n = 198							

Table 2 - Portuguese Consumers' Preference for Products from Sustainable Brands

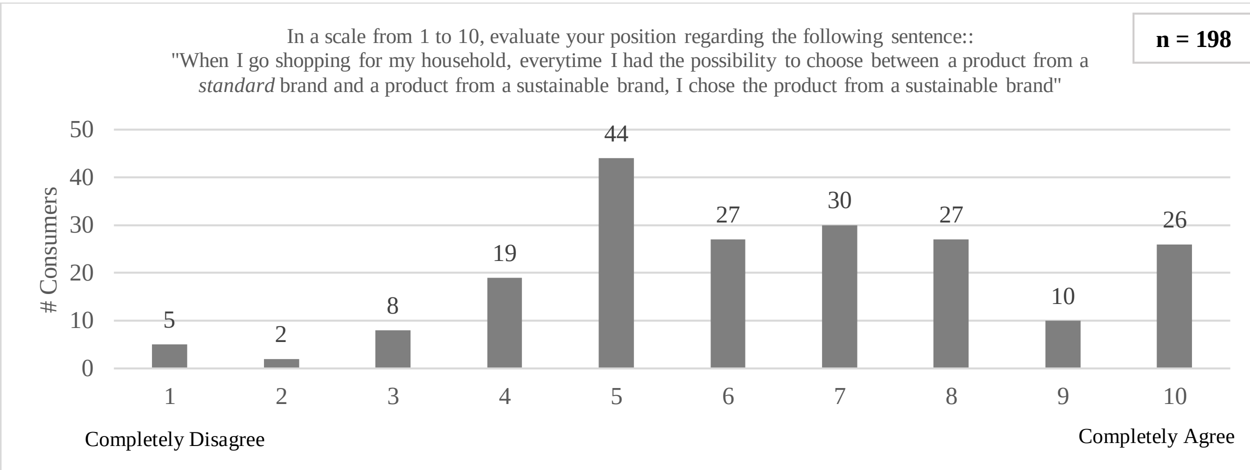

Figure 2 - Portuguese Consumers' Preference for Products from Sustainable Brands

Following a logical reasoning, consumers who frequently buy more products from sustainable brands tend to have a bigger preference for this kind of brands (see Annex 4 for more details). These results are also supported by data from Deloitte (2017): changes in the social, economic and technological context have led to a huge impact in the consumption habits of the Portuguese consumers as they now have a greater concern regarding familiar budget, health and the origin and sustainability of food products. Furthermore, 45% are willing to spend more on products and services provided by companies who are committed with social and environmental issues (Deloitte, 2017). Also, SONAE (2016) states that in terms of environmental issues that concern the Portuguese consumers, the most relevant are the forest fires (46%), the high amount of waste (34%) and the pollution of the sea, beaches and oceans (30%).

Besides this higher propensity for choosing sustainable brands, Portuguese consumers have very different outlooks and attitudes towards them.

n = 198				
Approximate % of the PT population	39%	61%		
Persona type	Non-Sustainable	Concerned	Millennials	Highly-Concerned
# Interviews	0	12	4	4

Table 3 - Qualitative Interviews' Respondents

Through in-depth interviews it was possible to create three different personas, who define Portuguese consumers' attitudes regarding the purchase of sustainable brands: the Concerned consumer, the Millennial and the Highly-Concerned consumer. In addition, the quantitative questionnaire enabled us to add another persona: the Non-Sustainable consumer. This persona was obtained considering all the respondents who answer bellow 6 in the question presented in Figure 2.

- **Persona 1: The Non-Sustainable Consumer**

The Non-Sustainable consumers represent almost half of the Portuguese consumers and does not depend on consumer's age nor education. The reasons that lead to this kind of behavior can vary from the lack of information regarding sustainability issues; the perception of the higher costs of these brands linked with the unavailable budget to buy them; or the unavailability for wasting time in buying and searching for products from these brands. However, we cannot provide specific details about this consumer since it is not the target of this work project but it is an important information to have in mind.

- **Persona 2: The Concerned Consumer**

This type of consumer is the most common when it comes to purchasing sustainable brands. Although the concerned consumer is highly price sensitive, its decisions do not depend on consumer's age nor education"

1. <u>Perception of sustainability and sustainable brands</u>

This consumer's definition of sustainability is not clear. Different meanings were used:

"Acho que é o reaproveitamento de tudo ao máximo, ou seja, aproveitar tudo ao máximo" (C5, 30, F, Employed)
*"Penso que tem **mais a ver com o ambiente** e com o aproveitamento dos produtos. O mais importante é ser menos nocivo para o ambiente e ser reutilizável."* (C4, 45, F, Employed)

They do not pay much attention to the brand of the product, focusing more on the product itself, namely if it is organic and produced without any hazardous materials or chemicals. A possible explanation for this type of behavior is that the consumer is concerned about the consequences that non-sustainable products can have on his health. As a result, there is a special attention to labels but more in terms of components than environmental and social certifications.

"Eu realmente vejo as embalagens e os certificados de muitas coisas. Por exemplo, se o peixe foi congelado de acordo com certas condições. Mas, no meio disto tudo quais são os certificados que posso acreditar?" (C8, 40, F, Employed).
"Normalmente tomo atenção as composições e se tem Es - evito isso." (C1, 55, F, Employed)

2. <u>Main drivers and influences of the purchase process</u>

This consumer buys sustainable brands or non-branded products in small local producers or in big supermarket chains, like Continente or Pingo Doce. The sources of information are mainly social media, the internet, documentaries from television or magazines and word-of-month.

"Porque acho que fazem melhor à saúde. Eu já estrago o meu corpo com tanta outra porcaria, porque fumo e não sei que, então quero compensar doutra forma". (C1, 55, F, Employed)
"O meu meio de pesquisa é principalmente o Facebook. Embora não acredite logo e vá fazer uma pesquisa para acrescentar informação a fontes mais viáveis "(C9, 22, M, Student)
"Na Internet. Ando sempre à procura do que faz bem e do que não faz bem" (C2, 54, F, Employed)

3. <u>Perception of brands who promote sustainable practices</u>

Although the Concerned consumer says he trusts brands who say they are sustainable, he believes that many brands do greenwashing – brands who promote environmental and social concerns but act on an opposite manner. In general, this consumer does not know "brands" in general – he only considers that brands, in general, deceive the consumer, but cannot provide specific examples.

"Se [essas marcas] não fossem [sustentáveis] mais tarde ou mais cedo se iria descobrir. Mas eu aprendi a ser desconfiado e a perguntar porquê. Eu quero ter informação suficiente para poder tomar a minha decisão." (C9, 22, M, Student)

"Montes de escândalos, eu é que não me lembro. Por exemplo, com a mão de obra infantil. E há marcas que se aproveitam disso, mais a nível de têxtil." (C2, 54, F, Employed)

4. <u>Big Brands vs. Small/Local Brands</u>

If the price is the same or slightly different for the two brands, this consumer classifies the small/local brand as more sustainable and prefers to buy products from a small/local brand as it fosters the growth of the regional economy and provides a bigger sense of trust, since the production is closer.

"Se calhar iria pelo produtor pequeno porque se calhar ele precisa de mais." (C1, 55, F, Employed)
"Se fosse ao mesmo preço compraria o da marca pequenina porque o produtor pequeno iria precisar mais" (C4, 45, F, Employed).

- **Persona 3: The Millennials**

This type of consumers is characterized by its age, 18 to 30 years old, its academic background and its price sensitivity.

1. <u>Perception of sustainability and sustainable brands</u>

Millennials' sustainable definition is based on the preservation of the present resources for the future generations as well as in the environmental, social and economic dimensions. This consumer is able to distinguish products from brands and is aware of brand's initiatives, although he does not understand them fully due to lack of information. As he is a very busy person, he does not pay attention to product's labels, only if he has time for that task.

"As gerações futuras terem os mesmos recursos que nós temos agora, na parte ecológica e social... Promover a igualdade entre pessoas e oportunidades." (M4, 20, M, Student)
"Quando tenho tempo, verifico os rótulos. Por exemplo, o rótulo do fair trade." (M3, 22, F, Student)
"Não sei como é que o consumidor se consegue informar se a marca que está a consumir é sustentável ou não" (M1, 22, M, Student).

2. <u>Main drivers and influences of the purchase process</u>

The Millennial searches the internet or pays attention to social media in order to stay informed about sustainability issues and purchases brands or non-branded products mainly in big supermarket chains like Continente and Pingo Doce.

*"A maior parte são em **hipermercados**, Continente e Pingo Doce"* (M3, 22, F, Student)

3. <u>Perception of brands who promote sustainable practices</u>

This consumer trusts the brands he buys his products from, however he also believes that many of these brands do greenwashing. The Millennial is a consumer capable of remembering a sustainability campaign from a brand he truly knows and is engaged with, but not more than that.

"Acredito que há muitas que o façam [greenwashing]. Mas não estou a ver nenhuma" (M4, 20, M, Student)
"Acho que o que vem mais à cabeça é aquela coisa das vaquinhas felizes" (M2, 18, M, Student)

4. <u>Big Brands vs. Small/Local Brands</u>

The Millennial would buy the product from the local/small brand, if the price was the same or not much different, in a way to foster the regional economy and because the brand conveys more trust, since the production is closer. However, this consumer is unsure about which of the brands is more sustainable since on one hand big brands would have more resources and more pressure to be sustainable, but on the other hand it should be easier to small/local brands to employ conceptual sustainability from the beginning and implement it as they are smaller.

*"Para mim **é mais fácil acreditar na marca local**. Como é local é mais confiável, embora acredita que as grandes empresas tenham mais pressão.* (M3, 22, F, Student)

- **Persona 4: The Highly-Concerned Consumer**

The Highly-Concerned consumer has specific characteristics: he is highly educated and pursued a graduation, master or even PhD, being older and more mature than the Millennial. By not being price sensitive, he is able to pay much more for a sustainable nonbranded product or sustainable brand that meets his needs and beliefs.

1. <u>Perception of sustainability and sustainable brands</u>

This persona's definition of sustainability complies with the one given in this work project however he states that sustainability is not enough nowadays as environmental issues are so serious that people should "regenerate" instead of "sustain". Same to the Millennials, he can clearly distinguish products from brands but avoids buying packaged products or products from big brands due to his extreme concern about packaged products production methods as well as its composition. This concern also leads to a constant verification of products' labels, which have to be simple and precise.

"Sustentabilidade tem a ver com suster um sistema, repondo de volta aquilo que tiramos. Se bem que a esta altura é mais útil regenerar do que suster. Tirarmos para as nossas necessidades e não comprometer as necessidades das futuras gerações." (HC4, 36, F, Employed)
"*Sim, verifico sempre. Sempre escolho aquilo que tem menos coisas na composição. Mesmo produtos que se dizem que são naturais e assim no rótulo produto tem coisas a mais que entrega o que o produto realmente é"* (HC3, 36, F, Employed)

2. Main drivers and influences of the purchase process

This consumer searches specific websites to find information but as he lives surrounded by people with the same or even more knowledge in this area, most of his knowledge is gained by word of mouth.

"Às vezes também há coisas que me chegam por amigos e que recomendam. Sou muito ligada à experiência que os meus amigos têm." (HC4, 36, F, Employed)

3. Perception of brands who promote sustainable practices

The Highly-Concern consumer is completely against brands, believing that the great majority of brands do greenwashing and tend to attract consumers by deceptively communicating sustainable practices in order to sell more. Small/Local brands were mentioned when it comes to sustainable practices and brands who performed sustainable practices in Portugal.

As marcas que têm ética e que foram criadas de raiz geram muito mais confiança que as outras, nas quais a motivação é dinheiro (HC1, 34, F, Employed)

"Marcas como por exemplo a Nestlé, que conheço a filosofia e as intenções, lucro e monopólios de mercado, e não tenho interesse nenhum em colocar nenhum tipo de recurso que possa suportar o negócio deles" (HC3, 36, F, Employed)

4. Big Brands vs. Small/Local Brands

If this consumer would have to choose between these two brands, he would without any doubt choose a product from a small/local brand, not only to foster the regional economy and his trust on the small/local production but also because he feels that big brands are not sustainable and would never focus on anything else besides profit.

"Eu vou à mesma sentir impulso para comprar diretamente do produtor local. Eu, para permitir a sobrevivência deste produtor, se eu não comprar ele deixa de ter razão de existir se eu só for à grande marca." (HC2, 56, F, Employed)

- **Global Considerations in Consumers' Point of View**

Although we could clearly identify 4 different personas, there are some general points of view in the Portuguese consumer' perspective:

- There is a **higher trust in regional**, **national products** and producers than international brands.
- Big **brands can do much more** that they are doing now.
- Consumers generally **do not know/remember** global **sustainable campaigns**. They remember campaigns like local water waste management or street clothes' donation – local campaigns.
- There is a mindset that **products from sustainable brands are more expensive** than products from standard brands but Portuguese sustainable consumers are willing to pay a small extra price for it.
- They **do not define themselves as "Sustainable Consumers"** although they want to evolve towards more sustainable practices.
- In most cases, especially when it comes to food, there was a **change in the consumption behavior.**
- Sustainable products are associated to a **higher quality**.
- Their motivation to buy sustainable brands is their **concern with the environment**, **the community** and the **future generations**.

2.2. BRANDS' STANDPOINT

2.2.1. Worldwide

Due to the growing tendency of consumers to choose sustainable products over standard ones and the pressure they put on brands to be sustainable, brands have been investing in corporate social responsibility: the number of "*investments funds that apply environmental, social or corporate governance criteria*" more than tripled going from 200 billion in 2013 to over 900 in 2014 (FSRI, 2015). In addition, 92% of the G250 companies report their CSR initiatives and KPMG believes it will be a "*required business practice*" in the future (KPMG, 2015).

There are several ways to improve brands' CSR responsibility practices such as acquiring raw materials from certified and trustful sources, reducing environmental footprint by increasing energy efficiency, water waste management and reducing carbon emissions; certifying food, shelter, safety conditions and decent wages to employees, between many others (Confino, 2014) . Besides, there are dozens of sustainability top brands' reports, as shown below, as well as different methods for evaluating and ranking them.

Lego ranked first in 2017 with 74.4 points, in a study by the Reputation Institute, by "*behaving ethically, conduction business fairly, operating transparently, protecting the environment and supporting worthy causes*" (Forbes, 2017). Some Lego's CSR initiatives are "Build the Change" (a social initiative), the "Sustainable Materials Center" and its partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (LEGO, 2015). Other top brands on this study were Microsoft, Google, Walt Disney, BMW, Intel, Bosch, Cisco and Rolls Royce (Forbes, 2017).

Following experts' standpoint, Unilever has been ranked the most sustainable brand for the seventh year in a row by 45% of the specialists in sustainability (GlobeScan-SustainAbility, 2017), followed by Patagonia and Interface, respectively. Unilever has created in 2010 the Unilever

Sustainable Living Plan which according to the brand "*is driving growth through brands with purpose, taking out costs and reducing risk* - *helping us* [Unilever] *build trust."* (Unilever, 2017).

2.2.2. Portugal

Information regarding brands' sustainable practices is hard to find or nearly inexistent. According to our observations brands in Portugal who pursue sustainable practices, like Unilever, Nestlé, Microsoft, etc. promote very little or do not promote at all ecological or social practices in the country. Additionally, the communication is made mainly by the commercial brands [some examples are Nespresso (Nestlé) and Ben & Jerry's (Unilever)]. As reported by these brands' websites, multinational brands focus on the two main aspects of sustainability: social and ecological.

In relation to Portuguese brands, the dairy products' brand Terra Nostra won the 2016 Green Projects Awards (a national reference initiative which recognizes initiatives that promote sustainable development) (Grande Consumo, 2017) and the Grande Prémio à Eficácia 2017 by APAN (Associação Portuguesa de Anunciantes) (Marketeer, 2017) with its "Vacas Felizes" campaign which focus in a sustainable milk production in an ecological, social and economical way. Also brands like Pingo Doce (Pingo Doce, s.d.), SONAE (SONAE, s.d.), EDP (EDP, 2017) and Corticeira Amorim (Amorim Group, s.d.) are stating their practices and achievements in their websites. Moreover, nowadays there are many small brands who are beginning to get some attention from the consumers like Miosótis, a Portuguese bio grocery (Miosótis, s.d.), eco-fashion brands, like NAE, who focus its production on eco vegan shoes (No Animal Exploitation, s.d.) and many others (Time Out, 2017).

2.3. COMPARING THE BRANDS' AND CONSUMERS' PERSPECTIVES

When it comes to sustainability definition, we can validate that brands and consumers have different definitions:

- The majority of the consumers define "sustainability" mainly through its ecological aspects.
- Consumers' references to social aspects are more focused on local producers while brands in focus more on social charity aspects.

Furthermore, brands are pursuing a sustainable strategy that, in some cases, is promoted in their websites through their mission and values, in (extensive) sustainability reports or not promoted at all. Our research suggests that the majority of these sustainable campaigns are not reaching the Portuguese consumer, as perceived in Table 4.

Unilever	*"A Unilever talvez fosse que eu imaginava mais perto disso, mas não sabia que se podia considerar uma marca sustentável. Apesar de ter práticas sustentáveis"*
Nestlé	- *"Não, nunca soube nada disso e não tinha conhecimento que eles faziam tais coisas"* - *"Desde que vi as fotografias dos gorilas e em carne viva, nunca mais comi um KitKat, e adorava"* - *"Eu não considerar ia a Nestlé sustentável porque nunca tinha olhado para eles dessa forma apesar de já ter ouvido da parte deles que eles se preocupam com isso"* - *"Deixei de usar Nespresso. Não acho sustentável porque tem o metal das capsulas, embora depois possa por a capsula na reciclagem"*
Ben & Jerry's	*"Como imenso Ben & Jerry's. Não sabia que eles faziam esse tipo de iniciativa"* *"Eu não sabia que eles eram sustentáveis, mas agora que trabalho com eles isso influencia a minha decisão"*
Starbucks	*"O Starbucks também tem um café de marcas de custo justo"* *"No Starbucks, na parede aparece a história mais ou menos de onde veio o café"*
Vacas Felizes	"*Quando penso em sustentabilidade o que vem mais a cabeça aquela coisa das vaquinhas felizes"*
Miosótis	"*Confio na Miosótis porque é uma casa com história e pelas pessoas que lá vão."* "N*a loja de produtos biológicos: Miosótis ou assim*."
Celeiro	"A *marca do Celeiro"* "*Celeiro dieta"*
Local Producers, Markets, etc	*"Eu tenho o cuidado de ir muito a feiras"* *"Marcas pequenas e pouco conhecidas para mim são marcas 100% sustentáveis"* *"Compro mais em mercearias, aqui perto"*

Table 4 – Consumers' perception about brands' sustainable campaigns

D. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO BRANDS OPERATING IN PORTUGAL

The conducted research in this work project leads us to conclude that the Portuguese consumer is not perceiving brands' sustainable practices most likely due to the poor communication of the brands' sustainable campaigns. Firstly, brands should segment and target consumers, according to, more or less, the presented personas in this work project. In the following table, we're going to mention the misleads between brands and each persona and provide recommendations.

PERSONA	MISFIT	RECOMMENDATIONS
Concerned consumer	Different "sustainability" definitions and unclear perception of its meaning.	Brands cannot just mention the word "sustainability".
		Dependent on the target, brands must decide if they should be more specific or not on what they define as "sustainable".
Millennial **Concerned consumer**	Unattractive information on brands' website	Brands should communicate their initiative on their products;
		Brands should educate these consumers about what the brand is doing with different tools and its impact (see Annex 5 for a Starbucks' example)
		Brands can also communicate sustainable initiatives through their website, on a visible and accessible platform (not in a report in three hundred pages), based with reliable sources, either producers, other consumers, ONGs, etc.
	Consumers don't know which certificates exist and the meaning of them	Brands with certificates should clearly explain its meaning

Highly-Concerned Consumer **Millennial** **Concerned Consumer**	Small and local brands are seen by the consumers as more trustful and transparent and are gaining awareness in Portugal	Brands' partnerships with local producers should be created and promoted in their products or website and social media (see annex 6 for a Miosótis' example)
	Brands' social charity practices are not seen by these consumers as sustainable practices since it was not mentioned by them in the interviews.	

Table 5 - Persona's misfits and recommended solutions

Brands should start by implementing recommendations regarding Concerned consumers and Millennials, since they are more willing to trust in brands' sustainable practices. Furthermore, these recommendations are easier to implement in a short time basis.

Finally, although all the personas' disposition to listen brands' sustainable strategies none of them trust brands 100% thus brands' communication should be true, transparent, simple and straight to the point.

E. PROJECT LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations to consider, regarding the results. Firstly, the limited dimension of the sample and difficulty in interview Millennials and Highly-Concerned Consumers. Further research with a wider sample, especially on these segments should be applied. Second, most of interviews were conducted to consumers living in Lisboa and Sesimbra. Future research covering a larger area should help to reinforce the conclusions.

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